

Response Under 37 CFR 1.116
Expedited Procedure
Examining Group 2836

Remarks

Claim Rejections Under 35 USC 112

Claims 39-42 are rejected under 35 USC 112 as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter Applicant regards as the invention. Independent claim 39 is rejected for reciting an incomplete method comprising only the step connecting apparatuses. Applicant believes that the claims have been amended to overcome the "112" rejections.

Amendments to the Claims

Claim 21 has been amended to include the features from the description and claim 27 that:

- means are included that provide a low, current limited test voltage to the output, and
- a device for detecting the electrical load at the output produced by the low test voltage is provided, and
- a memory device is included for storing configuration data, and
- the ascertaining device compares the detected load with a value stored in the memory, and
- whereby the voltage supply input is connected to the output in the case that no overload is detected upon comparison of the stored and measured load values.

Further, as Applicant understands it, claim 1 should be directed to "an apparatus for connecting modules to a supply voltage" instead of an "apparatus for modules connected to a supply voltage". This amendment has been made to more clearly define the subject matter.

In the last amendment, claim 1 defined that there is only one supply voltage input. However, this feature could be misunderstood. Consequently, "only one supply voltage input" has been replaced with "a supply voltage input".

Claims 32 and 35 have been amended to replace "apparatus" with "bus user", which should be more specific and clear.

Grewe (H)01PH0405USP US Patent Application 10/018,980
Amendment After Final Action, RCE, and PTO 2038, submitted in response to Office Action of 04/19/2007
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With respect to Claim 39, the Examiner objects to indefiniteness, as this claim would define an incomplete method comprising only the step of connecting apparatuses. This objection should be overcome by the claim amendments. Claim 39 now defines that a multitude of bus users are subsequently connected, whereby each connecting step includes all steps as defined in Claim 35. thus, the connection procedure is now defined in detail. In claim 39, the reference to claim 35 has been reintroduced to clarify the subject matter. Claim 39, as amended, now clearly defines that a number of bus users are subsequently connected in series, whereby each connection is performed using the method of claim 35.

Claim Rejections Under 35 USC 102

Claims 21-23, 25-26, 28-31 and 35-40 are rejected as being anticipated by Buhring. However, Buhring does not disclose the features included in claim 21. Specifically, Claim 21 defines a low, current limited test voltage that is applied to the module, which is connected downstream to the voltage supply output. In contrast to the current invention, the Buhring's switches of the embodiments of Figures 13-16 are bypassed with a shunt resistor (test resistor 63). Due to this resistance, the full voltage of the supply line 11 is also applied to the output line 11a, provided that there is no short circuit downstream of the separation unit. Further, Buhring's separation unit 17 lacks a memory device in which preset limit values are stored. Instead, switching according to the embodiment of Figure 12 in Buhring is accomplished due to a voltage divider arrangement with the resistors 63 and 81, which drives transistor 80. Transistor 80, on the other hand, drives the switching transistors 71 and 72. Thus, the point of switching is determined by the resistances of these resistors. Accordingly, in contrast to the present invention, there is no possibility for parameterization of the separation unit.

Based upon the above contrast and comparison, Claim 21 is novel with respect to Buhring.

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Furthermore, although Claim 27 has been deemed obvious, this cannot hold for amended Claim 21, which now includes the features of Claim 27. Specifically, Claim 27 has been deemed obvious over Ying and Buhring. However, Ying does not disclose anything about power switching. Instead, Ying discloses switching of data transmission lines. In particular, Ying does not disclose applying a test voltage, measuring the current at a voltage supply output resultant from the applied test voltage, comparing the current with a value stored in a memory, and connecting a voltage supply input to the voltage supply output in dependence of the comparison of the stored and measured values. Accordingly, the subject matter of Claim 21 cannot be derived from a combination of Ying and Buhring.

With respect to Claim 35, the Examiner raises the same objections as for Claim 21. Claim 35 has been amended analogously. Accordingly, the discussion of novelty of Claim 21 over Buhring applies to the subject matter of Claim 35, as well.

Claim Rejections Under 35 USC 103

Claims 27 and 41-42 are rejected as being unpatentable over Buhring in view of Ying.

Claims 32 and 33 are rejected as being unpatentable over Buhring in view of Prendel.

Due to the present claim amendments, this objection should be overcome. As Claim 32 has been amended analogously to Claim 21, the same arguments regarding differences from Buhring as discussed with respect to Claim 21 also apply for Claim 32. Further, the features introduced into Claim 32 cannot be derived from Prendel. It is not disputed that Prendel discloses a system for transmitting data and power between a multitude of serially connected base stations. However, Prendel fails to teach any details about the manner for how switching power lines are accomplished. Accordingly, if a person skilled in the art would combine the teachings of Buhring and Prendel, the person would rather use the separation devices 17 as disclosed in Buhring for switching the base

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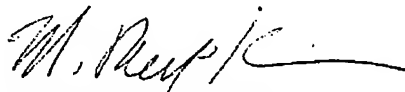
stations of the system disclosed in Prendel. Accordingly, amended Claim 32 should be patentable over Buhring in view of Prendel.

This Amendment After Final Action is necessary to place the claims in condition for allowance or in better condition for appeal. No new matter is added in this Amendment After Final Action.

Applicant respectfully requests a three month extension of time in which to respond to the outstanding Office Action, and a RCE are submitted herewith.

Wherefore further consideration and allowance of the claims, as amended, is respectfully requested.

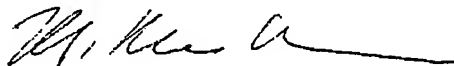
Respectfully submitted,



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